

# CHAPTER

# 2

## Review of Literature

### 2.1. The Preliminaries

Review of literature is an integral part of social science research, and accordingly, it has significance to justify the area of research that is proposed to be undertaken. The review of literature on the proposed area of study '*Bamboo Flowering, Human Security and the State: A Political Ecological Study of The Impact of Cyclical Bamboo Flowering on Human Security and the Role of State in Mizoram*' necessitates that the literature be reviewed from three different perspectives. Therefore, we have reviewed at least two broad categories of literature in the following sections: Firstly, the literature on the notion and theoretical underpinnings of Human Security; secondly, the focus is made on the literature pertaining to the cyclical bamboo flowering and its impact on human security in general. In the first category, we have discussed the various works and ideas in the evolution of the concept of human security, and on the conceptualizations of the concept and, finally, as an end part of the analysis of the competing approaches to human security. In the second category, we have begun with the exploration of the literature on Mizo history and society, then moved on to a general survey on bamboo studies, and finally to the review and analysis of the Literature on Bamboo Flowering and Human Security Studies: India's Northeast and Mizoram. The study has attempted to see

bamboo flowering in north east India in general and the state of Mizoram in particular and its subsequent impact on human security, and the role of the state in providing human security, and the consequent politics involving the political arrangements both at the national and the state level. In the final section, we have pointed out the existence of a research gap, thereby justifying the necessity of the present study.

## **2.2. Evolution of the Concept of Human Security**

### **2.2.1. The Early Roots**

The political use of the term “Human Security” dates back to the Enlightenment, when notions of individual liberty and freedom were advanced to counter the dictates of government. At its core, human security is a comparably undisciplined argument for a return to enlightenment liberalism<sup>1</sup> (Rothschild, 1995). Indeed, many of the basic principles of human security are crude reflections of Montesquieu, Rousseau and Condorcet. For Montesquieu, this was a singular focus on freedom and the perceived rights of individuals over the dictated security provided by the state. Security for Adam Smith meant the protection of the individual from ‘sudden or violent attack on one’s person or property’—this security being the most important prerequisite for a successful and ‘opulent’ society. Similarly, Condorcet described a societal contract in which the security of the individual was the central principle. If freedom from fear is not guaranteed, he argued, then, individuals could not be effective members of a political relationship. This liberal perspective was widespread, but not unanimous. Although in agreement over the vital role of individual safety, other thinkers believed that this

could best be achieved as a consequence of the security of the state, thus, acting as protector from both external and internal threats. For Hobbes, it meant little whether a man's insecurity was at the hands of a local thief or an invading army. Protection from either, he believed, was the absolute responsibility of the state. For this protection, the citizen should give up any and all individual rights to his country, his protector; security prevailing over liberty (Ullman: 1983).

While also looking at the role of the state in providing individual security, Kant envisioned a higher authority still. He proposed a Universalist international order: a global society, based primarily on the moral imperative of a common good as seen by its member nations (Ullman: 1983). As a middle ground between the two, Grotius proposed a more moderate international dynamic, one not guided by supranational law, but by a balance of power amongst states and a social contract between them and their citizens. For Grotius, the mutual interests of independent but co-existing state entities would ensure the security of all. Although each gave rise to a different school of international thought, for instance, Hobbes to realism, Kant to global security, and, Grotius to international security; all based the primary responsibility of protecting individual security in the hands of the state. This would become the dominant worldview, overtaking more liberal thinking, until the end of the Cold War. In other words, the dominant concept of security at the time was state-centric, privileging the instruments and agents of the state, carrying forward the principles of state sovereignty as first articulated in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and subsequently followed by the others like Congress of Vienna 1815.

### 2.2.2. Post Cold War Developments

Although human security's ostensible roots can be found in early liberal philosophic writings, its practical manifestation is representative of a post-Cold War scepticism toward the dominant traditional security paradigm. Traditional state-centred security reached a peak during the Cold War. For forty years, the major world powers entrusted the security of their populace, and to a certain extent of the world, to a balance of power among states. For this prevailing realist view, the referent object of security is the state and presumes, in a very Hobbesian fashion that if the state is secure, then so too will those that live within it. This type of security relied primarily on an anarchistic balance of power, the military build-up of two superpowers, and on the absolute sovereignty of the nation-state. States were deemed in the scholarly literature and security analysis to be entirely rational entities, with the maximization of power guiding national interests and policy. Security was seen as protection from invading armies; protection was provided by technical and military capabilities; and wars were never to be fought on home soil, rather, proxy wars were used if direct combat were necessary. With the fall of the Berlin Wall it became clear that despite the macro-level stability created by the East-West military balance of the Cold War, citizens were not necessarily safe. They may not have suffered from outright nuclear attack, but they were being killed by the remnants of proxy wars, environmental disaster, poverty, disease, hunger, violence and human rights abuses. Ironically, the faith placed in the realist worldview, and the security it provided, masked the actual issues threatening the individual. Once the central foci of security, the protection of the person was all too often negated by an over-attention on the state. By allowing key issues to fall

through the cracks, 'traditional security' failed at its primary objective: protecting the individual.

This led to the challenging of the notion of traditional security by such concepts as cooperative, comprehensive, societal, collective, international and human security. Although these concepts move away from a focus on inter-state relations, human security takes the most dramatic step by making the referent object not the state, society or community, but the individual. This shift is meant to direct research and policy towards the actual issues threatening peoples' lives. As an example of the difficulty of articulating the concept, Rothschild (1995) describes human security philosophically as part of both a broadening and a deepening of what we once viewed as security. She argues that the focus on state security must be extended to include supranational systems as well as the individual condition, and the range of included harms must be broadened to include serious threats to either. Also, the responsibility to ensure security must be diffused to include local governments, international agreements, NGOs, public opinion, and the financial market. Although not an explicit definition, this conceptualization provides an example of how narrow the traditional paradigm has been, as well as how complex the expansion of the concept can become. Although many attempts have been made to more specifically define what is an inherently ambiguous concept (as it by definition encompasses a potentially unlimited list of threats), two conceptual schools of thought have emerged in which most definitions can be grouped. These are the broad and narrow conceptions of human security. A spectrum has been used to describe the possible definitions of human security. It can be seen in its broad sense as incorporating a long list of possible threats, from traditional security threats such as

war to more development-oriented threats such as health, poverty and the environment. In its narrow sense, the spectrum, although still focused on the individual, and therefore incorporating many more threats than traditional security, is limited to violent threats such as landmines, small arms, violence and intra-state conflict.

In the last 25 years, discussion of human security has begun to incorporate insights from the peace and disarmament debate, assessments of the impact of demographic change, and critiques of economic development. Conceptualization of security has therefore moved beyond preoccupation with the territorial integrity of nation states, and has been reinvigorated by the recognition that concerns for the individual –such as human rights, gender equity and a minimum social entitlement – have much to contribute to our understanding. In the nuclear debate, for example, it has been argued that the stability and well being of communities and nations rests as much on factors associated with human development, economic growth, and democracy as on acquisition of a weapons arsenal. (Palme Commission: 1982, Barnett: 1981) The relationship between national security and demographic change has also attracted attention. Mass migration, rapid population growth, and sudden changes in population growth rates have each been seen to threaten the stability of a nation, reminding us that the security of people and their states are interconnected. It is in the context of this debate that we have outlined our principal argument: namely, that population movement, public health, gender relations or social conflict in general can and should be addressed using a human security framework, not least because this framework focuses our attention on the actual people involved and the human costs of policy making.

### 2.2.3. Conceptualizing Human Security

Concepts play a major role in thinking, debating upon and shaping the world. Using new concepts is therefore not neutral. They can be an instrument of change in their own right. Human security is such a concept with the power to change approaches to security and it already represents new shared understanding in International Relations. Yet it is also an ambiguous and elastic concept that needs further analysis. As regards the notion of 'human security' and its theoretical underpinnings, a deluge of literature could be located: some dealing with the definitional aspects of human security, while others dealing with its nature, scope and contents, among others. A few important works in this respect include Brown (1977), Ullmann (1983), Mathews (1989), Blatz (1967), and, McRae and Hubert (2001), among others -who argued that the concept of security should encompass more than military threats and associated vulnerabilities. However, in its present form, the concept of human security emerged as part of the holistic paradigm of human development cultivated at UNDP by former Pakistani Finance Minister Mahbub ul Haq (Haq: 1994), with strong support from economist Amartya Sen. UNDP's 1994 global HDR was the first major international document to articulate human security in conceptual terms with proposals for policy and action. In 1994 *Human Development Report* the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994) identified human security as the sum of seven distinct, though interrelated, dimensions of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political. Similarly, Buttedahl, (1994) sees human security as centering on human dignity; comprised of the following dimensions: personal and physical security; economic security; social security; political

security; and, ethnic and cultural security. But, a decade later the Commission on Human Security (CHS) defined human security, but with explicit reference to civil rights and basic human needs (CHS, 2003). According to this definition, human security may be broadly defined as a process of intervention to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment through protection of civil rights and provision of basic human needs. The phrase “human security” is intended to capture and refine development’s changing character in today’s environment, with new nuances and tone. But as Guzzetta (2001) noted, the human security concept was not well formed and lacked agreement over what precisely each component consisted of. The explanation of human security took considerable time to reach any sort of consensus, and is in fact still debated. The emergence of the term in recent decades is especially linked to the plight of the world’s absolute poorest as well as the tragedy of refugees and internally displaced persons, but the concept has implications for vulnerable populations of all kinds (Jones, 2009). This handful of thinkers argued that we inhabit a world increasingly characterized by transnational, interconnected, non-military problems, such as the rapid expansion and movement of populations, the grinding poverty affecting billions of individuals, an explosion of new and resurgent infectious diseases, and diverse forms of environmental degradation. These threats to human welfare, social stability and progress deserve attention as issues of national and international security. Human security departs from the traditional conception of state security to concentrate on the security of people and communities.

Human security is about security within states and takes into account how various issues prevalent in a given society impact its security. Human security challenges the notion of state security and advocates that states must concern themselves with the security of the individual. Human security includes all kinds of threats: environmental, economic, social, cultural etc. (Chenoy: 2009). The very essence of human security means to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Ogata and Cels (2003) argue that human security offers a framework for identifying rights and obligations in a particular security situation. The United Nations Commission on Human Security highlights that 'Human security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential' (Mlambo: 2005). UNDP launched human security as an "integrative" rather than a "defensive" concept in the *Human Development Report 1994*. Seven interrelated dimensions were identified as economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. According to UNDP (1994) "human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode into violence, a dissident who was not silenced." Human security is also defined as ensuring "risk reduction," removing insecurity, or reducing vulnerabilities (Nef, 1999). The Commission on Human Security<sup>ii</sup> (CHS) has further clarified the concept as one that focuses on the individual and seeks protection from threats to human life, livelihood, and dignity, and the realization of full potential of each individual. Human security addresses both conflict and developmental aspects including displacement, discrimination

and persecution of vulnerable communities as well as insecurities related to poverty, health, education, gender disparities, and other types of inequality (CHS, 1994). Therefore, human security is understood as the ability to withstand threats such as disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards. Threats to human security can be economic, ecological, social, and political, and they can occur as sudden shocks, long-term trends, or seasonal cycles.

#### **2.2.4. Human Security: Analysis of Competing Conceptualizations and Approaches**

Different scholars have conceptualized human security from different standpoints with differing approaches. Matsumae and Chen (1995) is collection of papers focusing on international perspectives on humanity and security: basic similarities or differences between Western versus Asian perspectives on security; common security approaches for peace promotion, and human security in Asia.

Buzan *et al* (1997) sets out the two competing schools of thoughts in security studies: the 'traditionalists' who continue to focus restrictively on politico-military issues and the 'wideners' who seek to extend the agenda to incorporate economic, societal and environmental sectors (i.e. human security issues).

Ghai (1997) provides a thorough overview of the concept and processes of globalisation and its implications for human security. Ghai outlines some of the negative economic consequences of accelerated globalisation as well as the social

and cultural impacts before moving on to consider aspects reflected at the political and institutional levels. He endorses rapid growth policies but calls for these to be matched by human investment policies, to work in tandem with responsible and accountable institutions at local, regional, national and international levels. Bethel (1999) outlines some of the scholarly writings of the Japanese philosopher Makiguchi - whose work focused on the interdependence and interrelatedness among individuals, their society and nature.

Nef (1999) presents that, the seemingly secure societies of the North are increasingly vulnerable to events in the less secure and underdeveloped regions of the globe in a manner that conventional international relations and development theory have failed to take full account of. The central thesis that Jorge Nef presents here is that the seemingly secure societies of the North are increasingly vulnerable to events in the less secure and underdeveloped regions of the globe in a manner that conventional international relations and development theory have failed to take full account of. Nef talks about the increasingly interdependent system on the pretext that weaknesses on the periphery can only render the entire configuration less stable - this he coins as 'mutual vulnerability.'<sup>iii</sup> This ties in with a conception of human security that recognises that the international system is only as strong as its weakest link, and that attaining sustained and sustainable homeostasis in any society depends on a significant and continuous reduction of risk and insecurity at all levels. Nef sees human security as largely centered on human dignity and synonymous with human rights - but also as resting on a number of interwoven dimensions. These he classifies as: environmental, personal and physical security -the right of

individuals and communities to preservation of their life and health and to dwell in a safe and sustainable environment; economic security – access to employment and resources needed to maintain one's existence, reduce scarcity, and improve the material quality of life in the community; social security – freedom from discrimination based on gender, age, ethnicity or social status, with access to safety nets; political security – the right to representation, autonomy (freedom), participation and dissent, this includes legal-judicial security; cultural security – the psychological orientations of a society which enhance the ability to control uncertainty and fear. Nef (ibid.) goes on to examine each of these five sub-areas of human security in turn noting the interconnectedness and transnationality of each security threat. In conclusion, he says that to date complex interdependence has largely been seen from a skewered Euro-American ethnocentric stance (with its emphasis on the World Bank, IMF, transnational corporations, G-7 and the like), and that the time has now come to readdress the intricacies and interdependence of Southern inequalities, from an underdeveloped rather than a developed point of view. Nef suggests that a bottom up rather than just a top down perspective might provide another framework of analysis for dealing with the myriad global human security predicaments that we all face together.

Sen (1999) explores and examines an approach which perceives 'individual freedom as a social commitment', and, in this vein, closely aligned with the precepts of human security built upon his previously set forth ideas of entitlements, enhancement of people's capabilities and quality of life but focuses here on the empirical and philosophical interplay between various-freedoms.

Stoett (1999) seeks to add to the Post-Cold-War international politics genre with this discussion of 4 principal threats to human and global security: state violence, environmental degradation, population displacement and globalisation.

Thomas and Wilkin (1999) explores security from a human perspective drawing on case material from sub-Saharan Africa, specifically looking at what the global capitalist economy has done –or more to the point - not done for African human security. It questions the desirability of vesting decision making authority in Trans-national organisations (TNC) with their dubious labour practices, and Inter governmental organisations (IGO), such as the World Bank and IMF, with their structural adjustment programmes and points to some of the destabilising impacts this has had on human security.

Graham and Poku (2000) Examines the inter-state and internal migration patterns of the 1990's and the socio-economic and political tensions that can surface with the displacement of civilian populations, as well as immigration and asylum seeking issues. The authors explore the relationship between the tenuous position held by migrants and a range of human security threats, which includes globalizing forces, as well as presenting some of the difficulties that exist in developing multilateral strategies to ease the resultant national and international tensions.

Thomas (2000) is centered on satisfying people's basic material needs, mapping poverty and inequality in the global economy as it has evolved in the 80s and 90s. However, it also incorporates non-material dimensions: human dignity, a sense of community and democracy.

Human security, thus, is multidimensional incorporating the psychological, material, moral, cultural, civic, legal and political domains (Lodgaard: 2000; Takasu: 2000; Sabur: 2003; Bruce: 2003; Hussain: 2007). This necessitates the notion of human security and its theoretical underpinnings to be understood from different perspectives for its subsequent application in the proposed area of study.

### **2.3. Literature on Mizo History and Society**

The third category of the literature that was reviewed consisted of those relating to the Mizos: their history, culture, society and Mizos experience of the insurgency and other attributes related to the history of the Mizos, the structure and dynamics of Mizo society, administration, economic development, etc. The prominent works on the history of the Mizo and Mizo society include Thanga (1978), Chatterjee (1985), Singh (1994), Lalrimawia (1995), Sangkima (2004), Lalthangliana (2005), and Joshi (2005), among others. Thanga (1978) is more an anthropological history of the Zo tribe, and makes an analysis of the qualities and character of the Mizo people in a historical context. Similarly, Roy (1982) is a sociological analysis of the dynamics of change in Mizo society. Chatterjee (1985) has delved exclusively on the history of the Mizo people under the British rule. Singh (1994) is an ambitious work and attempts an analysis of the Mizo geographical, social, economic, political and administrative history. Lalrimawia (1995) examines the possibility of the Mizos having originated from *Chinlung* (China) and details their migration from the Shan state of Burma. The British period has also been covered in great details. Apart from historical facts, the details of the warring tribes, social customs

are adequately dealt upon and make for fascinating reading, especially for those interested to know more about Mizoram and its people. The period of MNF insurgency, subsequent ceasefire and agreement and political development together with the role of the church has also been discussed. Lalrimawia argues that the cross followed the British flag in Mizoram and also started English education and the missionaries own major share in educational infrastructure. Christian church transformed the Mizo society with its various associations and activities. Sangkima (2004) *Essays on the History of the Mizos* has been systematically organised to provide a detailed analysis of various historical antecedents of Mizo history. The book traces the origin of the Mizos from the documentary studies as well as the legends and the folklore. The Mizo social institutions are all covered along with the introduction of Christianity. It has also touched upon the merger of Mizoram with India during the independence down to erstwhile Lushai hills district of undivided Assam unto a full-fledged Christian state of Mizoram. Lalthangliana (2005) traces the history of culture and folklore of Mizo people. Similarly, Joshi (2005) is a comprehensive history of the people of Mizoram till today. However, being primarily on the historical analysis of the people and society, these works have only sporadically and cursorily touched the menace of bamboo flowering and associated social and economic implications of the menace.

Other allied themes in the available literature include Lalneihzovi (2006) *District Administration in Mizoram*, which deals with the theoretical conception of district administration in India from an ancient period down to modernity, also highlighting the functioning of district administration in Northeast India and Mizoram in particular. Lianzela (1994) is a

pioneering work on the analysis of the economic development process of the state of Mizoram. The book covers a period from the 1<sup>st</sup> five year plan (then Lushai Hills) to the seventh plan 1985-90 (Mizo Hill district to the UT to the state). In evaluating the economic development during the three different phases necessary comparisons etc has been made as regard to the administration of development substituted by a multitude of tables in each chapter. C. Nunthara (1989) discusses the impact of the introduction of grouping of villages in Mizoram as a response to the problem of insurgency. Nirmal Nibedon (1983) in Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade provides a careful and detailed analysis of the Mizo insurgency from the beginning of the movement for the demand of statehood to independent state down to the signing of Peace Accord with the Government of India. Whereas N. K Nag (1973) analyses Christianity and the role of Church in Mizoram, Prasad and Agarwal (1995) deals with the nature of public administration in Mizoram, Chakraborty (1995) is a compilation /compendium of tribal laws, and Prasad (1987) focuses on the governance and government and politics in Mizoram. Although apparently these works should have dealt with the issue of bamboo flowering from administrative, social, economic, political and/or legal perspectives, such analysis is conspicuous by its absence in these works.

## **2.4. Literature on Bamboo Flowering and Human Security Issues**

The second part of literature review confronts the literature with a focus on the notion of bamboo flowering and its impact on the human security. As it is a matter of fact that bamboo takes long to flower so is true with the literature to develop. Scanty

literatures were available on the focus area. Broadly, we can divide the literature into two categories: on bamboo studies in general; and, on the security implications of bamboo flowering, with a particular focus on India's Northeast.

### **2.4.1. Bamboo Studies**

The reference can be made of Espiloy (1972) who shows some properties of bamboo and details in general terms the physical properties and uses of 19 erect and 13 climbing bamboo species of Philippine. Espiloy and Sasondicillo (1976) Shows some biophysical and mechanical properties of *Bambusa vulgaris* are described. Ghavami, and Hombeeck (1981) show application of bamboo in two parts. In part 1, Mechanical properties and water repellent treatment of bamboo are considered. In part 2, the impact of bamboo on society at large is considered. Janssen (1986) presents a physical and mathematical model to determine the age of bamboo and its life cycle. Mutua Bahadur. (1994) presents in detail how variously the bamboos are used as craft material in Manipur in comparison to other states of north east of India. Ghavami (1989) contains research results concerning the physical and mechanical properties of seven species of bamboos in Rio de Janeiro, and descriptions of a new water repellent material for bamboo for the use in permanent shutter slabs, and a new form of bamboo space structure. A huge amount of research presented here is equally significant and relevant for the north east. Ghosh (1998), attempts to show, how variously the bamboos can be utilized before they gets destroyed by the process of gregarious flowering in north east India. Author also focuses on the impact that bamboo can have on the social and economic manifestations of human life. Higuchi (n.d.) deals with the lignification<sup>iv</sup> process of the whole culm of *Phyllostachys*

*pubescence* during its growth and maturation and compares it with successive changes in external morphology. Bennet and Gaur (1990) shows the different types of bamboos that are grown in different parts of India. The authors argue that most of these bamboos have a life cycle not extending beyond 50 years. The analysis concludes that the bamboos die a natural death and hence has nothing to do with the issues of human security. Baruah (2003) show the distribution of bamboo vegetation in Assam and its various species in detail. The analysis however fails to address the issue of gregarious bamboo flowering.

#### **2.4.2. Literature on Bamboo Flowering and Human Security Studies: India's Northeast and Mizoram**

Another category of the literature that was reviewed consisted of those relating to bamboo flowering in north east India in general and the state of Mizoram in particular and its subsequent impact on human security. Much literature has been developed so far as the mechanism or the life cycle of the bamboo is concerned focusing on bamboo flowering in Mizoram and north east India, from so far as the chemical science or botanical science perspective is concerned.

Savur (2003) argues that the state of the impact of bamboo flowering on the civil society at large is negative in character and as such bamboo flowering is followed by explosion of rodent population and eventual famine. Janzen (1976) gives a detailed analysis of the bamboo life cycle of the various species taking into account the Lushai Hills and concluded in the finding that the majority of the species found in Mizoram has a life cycle of

about 48 years. Analysis also takes into account, the various sizes of the bamboo seeds and its contents. Most interestingly, the author argues that the primary predators of the bamboo seeds are the human beings.

Dunkelberg (1985) gives a huge contribution to the study of bamboo, its flowering and its impact on the society of the north east of India. This contribution is broadly divided into two parts: part one deals with bamboo as a material, which includes classification, growth, anatomy, propagation, Properties, chemical composition, harvesting, preservation and working of bamboo, part two deals with the use of bamboo in built structures based on field work in Southeast Asia. Numerous structural types have been covered.

Seethalakshmi and Muktesh (1998), particularly lament the state and the central governments for their failure to provide human security and human well being during the gregarious bamboo flowering in north east India during the early 1960s. They had also anticipated a bamboo flowering at the end of 2007 and early 2008 and advocated for the precautionary measures to be developed and undertaken.

Singhal and Gangopadhyay (1999) provide the data base regarding the bamboo plantation in India and show the different characteristics of bamboo in different climatic conditions, its life cycle ending in gregarious flowering which fosters human insecurity. Power (2003) argues that the life cycle of muli bamboo, the predominant species in India's northeast, is about 50 years. During 1959, when the bamboo forests of Mizoram flowered, the abundance of seeds produced by the plants and their subsequent predation of rodents and rats created a plague

of rats, which in turn devoured rice paddies, leading to widespread famine in the region. However, it does not deal with the political intricacies involved in the bamboo flowering related insecurities in detail.

Akhil Ranjan Dutta (2009) is a comprehensive volume on human security in northeast India. However, this volume is primarily preoccupied much with the insurgency related insecurities in the north eastern states of India. Dutta, has not focused on the issues of bamboo flowering and the associated human insecurity and hence the area is largely unexplored.

Other specific works on bamboo flowering in Mizoram include among others, Baveja (1970), "The Land Where Bamboo Flowers", which discusses bamboo flowering and related socio-cultural issues in Mizoram. Baveja shows how the natural ecological process of bamboo flowering has impacted the Mizo society and its economy again and again. Sajal Nag (2001), in his "Tribals, Rats, Famines, States and the Nation", explores the bamboo flowering and famines. Nag focuses on the historical evidences of the famine that had gripped the then Lushai Hills during the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Agarwal, Chopra and Sharma (1982), "The Bamboo Famine in Mizoram"; Barpujari (1996), "Bamboo Flowering in Mizoram-Historical Review"; Paromita Kar (2008), "Blooms of Destruction"; Nadgauda (2002) which discusses bamboo flowering and famine, Talukdar (2008), "An analysis of food crisis in Mizoram as a result of bamboo flowering"; Chauhan (1981) which is a biological study of the population dynamics of rats related to bamboo flowering in northeast India, Das and Sachan (1980), "Rodent control mechanism in Mizoram", and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty (2012), "On the politics of bamboo flowering on Mizoram". Of

these, the work by Anup Shekhar Chakraborty (2012) is the work in the present direction. However, being a brief research article, it does not comprehensively deal with the issue.

While reflecting to the review of literature, we come across some primary elements that need the mention here. That the notions of human security has transformed over the years from the state security again involving the duality; the first being the security of the state concerned from the external threats of war and other allied activities and the second being the state as the provider of security to the citizens and subjects. Significantly, the state then is responsible for the creation of securities and furtherance of the same in the greater interest of the society. This argument for many political as well as social scientists is the basis for the creation of the state and its right to claim obligation from the people. However, the problem arises in situations where the state either disregard or does not adequately address such situations which may time and again arise having an impact on the livelihood securities of the people concerned. Similar has been the case of Mizoram where the apathetical attitude of the state of Assam during famine of late 1950s and early 1960s that aroused the Mizos to stand for the right to self determination.

## **2.5. Research Gaps and Need for the Present Study**

The review of literature has suggested the transformations in the conceptual clarity regarding the various issues that have been taken for the study. The changing nature of human security in altered environmental and socio-economic conditions necessitates that it be understood against the backdrop of any given society, social structures and political institutions involved

therein. As in the case of Mizoram, the wellbeing of humans at many situations have been jeopardized by the natural process of bamboo flowering. Bamboo, despite being a part and parcel of Mizo society, culture and economy at times creates externalities jeopardizing the livelihood security of the masses. The bamboo has a bittersweet relationship with the people of Mizoram and recorded that a famine called *Mautam* triggered by the widespread flowering of the plant in 1959 claimed thousands of human lives in the state (Talukdar: 2007; Lalnunmawia: 2008; Lalengliana: 2000). It also gave birth to a raging tribal insurrection in the state (Lalnunmawia: 2008; Jha: 1999; Lalengliana: 2000). It is argued that the failure of the state and central governments led to the birth of Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF), an organisation created to help people get relief (Lalnunmawia: 2008; Lalthangliana: 2005).

The natural ecological phenomenon of bamboo flowering has significant ecological and economical impacts on the affected areas (Lalthangliana: 2005), which has challenged the very basis of the states in providing human security. The Mizo society at large has understood the mechanism of bamboo flowering as natural but over the centuries it also has created a sense of fear and insecurities in the society. The history of Mizoram since the earliest times to today has been largely a history of people's struggle to come out of the ecological onslaughts, represented by the phenomenon of bamboo flowering and the associated effects on human security and well being. There have been instances of recurring famines, consequent migrations, resulting in socio-political instability. Wars and insurgencies in Mizoram have been often referred to as consequences of unabated natural disaster emanating from the natural-ecological phenomenon of bamboo flowering. Post-statehood Mizoram has maneuvered the

phenomenon as a bargaining strategy for the flow of union assistance to Mizoram. The phenomenon has become a site of debates on human (in)security and scales and magnitudes of politicking within and beyond the state of Mizoram.

Therefore, as revealed from the review of the existing literature in the foregoing sections that on the part of the social science, the progress is negligible as until recently bamboo flowering was not considered as a matter to be studied from the social science point of view. However, with the emergence of interdisciplinary studies, the issues relating to ecology and environment has come to form a part of social and political studies as is evident from the emergence of political ecology as a perspective in political science. Therefore, there is a visible gap in the existing literature on the subject and the present work prompts to bridge the gap through the political-ecological study of the phenomena of bamboo flowering and its implications leading to human insecurities and the role of the state mechanism in mitigating such insecurities.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Enlightened Liberalism is a concept that stresses the development and exercise of our capacity for autonomy. It is a transformation of the Rawlsian idea of political liberalism.

<sup>ii</sup> Commission on Human Security – The United Nations has formed an academic body for the articulation, debates and discussion on human security and also to formulate policy recommendations from time to time. This commissions analyses the human security situations in different political system i.e. nations and report to the general assembly of the United Nations. The membership to this commission is

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commissioned by the UN Secretary General on the recommendations of the General Assembly.

iii Mutual Vulnerability - The concept of 'mutual vulnerability' was articulated and popularized by Jorge Nef during 1990s. This is a concept that is vital to an understanding of the world in which now we live. The concept of mutual vulnerability is associated with the increased manifestations of the global crisis everywhere: violence, floods, famines, militancy, terrorism, environmental degradation and several others. These are considered as mutually risks for the human civilization, making personal, social and other forms of security vulnerable.

iv Lignification: Lignification is a process in which the cell wall turn into wood or become woody through the formation and deposit of lignin in cell walls. The strength of the wood for its commercial use and exploitation depends on the deposits of the lignin on the cell wall of the plants.